

Get Gephardt: Sharp Spike In Questar Bill

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(KUTV) Imagine a summertime gas bill 18 times higher than usual? When that happened to a Bountiful couple, and the gas company said there is no mistake it was time to Get Gephardt.

Eighteen-hundred percent – from \$15 a month to almost \$270 – and this in a summer month when it's likely a household would use less gas. I heard not from just one household, but two. There must be something wrong.

Jerry and LoAnn Solt shut down their furnace in the summer to save gas, and the big surprise was a \$269 gas bill.

"I thought, 'Oh, they made a mistake. They read the meter wrong,'" says LoAnn.

There was no mistake, said Questar. The Solts used the gas, said customer service, so they had to pay.

"He just said we owed it, but he couldn't tell me why," LoAnn says.

The problem is not a billing problem at all. It's a new transponder – one of about 850,000 Questar says they've been installing on our gas meters over the past couple of years so they can take meter readings by remote control.

After we called Questar about the Solt's case, they investigated, and it turns out this particular transponder on the meter was installed improperly, so they had in fact been not paying for gas that they had been using.

Questar says by law, because the problem was with their equipment, they can't collect for all 17 months that that meter malfunctioned – only 6 months.

There's a new deal in place. The Solts will not have to pay the full \$269 for 17 months. Questar is computing the charges for 6 months, and then the Solts will be able to pay that less expensive bill over the next 6 months... and their meter has now been fixed.

Questar Gas tells us they've checked 26,000 of the transponders in the past two months and found problems with only 22 of them.

Keep an eye on *your* gas bill. If the monthly rate explodes, contact Questar and tell them you saw this story, and you need them to come out and check your newly installed remote control meter.

If you have a problem you can't solve, the number is 973-3122, or my e-mail address is Gephardt@kutv2.com.